

expropriation of the land and the proletarianization of the peasantry.

The Musha'a

In addition to village land, villagers traditionally had access to land around the village. This land, identified earlier as Matruka or Musha'a, was not claimed by any individual or family in the Hamula. Instead, it was commonly used by all the village. Matruka or Musha'a land was largely uncultivated. It was used, as in the Mark commune described by Marx, for grazing, grain storage and as a source of water. In other words, this land provided supplementary resources for the villagers.

It is not surprising that all the literature which mistakenly assumes that the Musha'a was a form of land tenure and that it was also widespread (Baer, 1976; Flapan, 1979; Firestone, 1975), finds the system as an excuse to justify its conceptual approach. In almost all of this literature, the Musha'a system of land use is seen as the reason for the backwardness of the Palestinian economy (10), the argument being that it was an obstacle to "modernization", preventing private ownership of land and rendering capitalist development of agriculture impossible (Granovsky, 1940; Kimmerling, 1983; Warriner, 1948). It is argued that the frequent redistribution of the Musha'a land and its parcellization among the villagers' families made it difficult for any large-scale machinery to be employed on this land (because of the small size of each parcel). The Musha'a system, it is also observed, presented a major obstacle to the emergence of private ownership of land since, in order to sell one continuous piece of land, the consent of all the families involved was needed (Warriner, 1966; Brown, S.G :1982).